

Citizens and City staff at the University Area Plan and BLE public meeting

University City Area Plan

On Tuesday, December 9, 2014, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Department and CATS hosted a community meeting where residents had the opportunity to learn about what's included in the draft University City Area Plan. The meeting focused on policy recommendations for land use, community design, transportation, and open space within University City as future development occurs. This plan will influence future development decisions and guide infrastructure improvements over time.

The draft document will be posted to the University City Area Plan project website prior to January 1, 2015. Planning staff will accept comments

from the community regarding draft recommendations throughout the review and adoption process that will begin in January 2015. Opportunities for public comment will be available during a regularly scheduled Planning Committee meeting and during a City Council meeting (exact dates are to be determined). Affected property owners will receive a notification by mail and information will also be available on the project website.

For more information visit <http://UCAP.charlotteplanning.org> or contact Mandy Vari, Project Manager: 704-336-2205; BLEStationAreaPlans@charlottenc.gov

Building the foundations of Charlotte's future

Fall has brought a wave of retaining wall construction throughout the corridor. The walls being built along North Tryon Street will hold back the soil that will be under the new roadway, with bike lanes and sidewalks, creating space in the median for the Blue Line Extension (BLE) tracks. Construction crews are building retaining walls along the railroad corridor to widen the area, next to the railroad tracks, where the light rail will be built.



Old Concord Station Foundation Crew Working

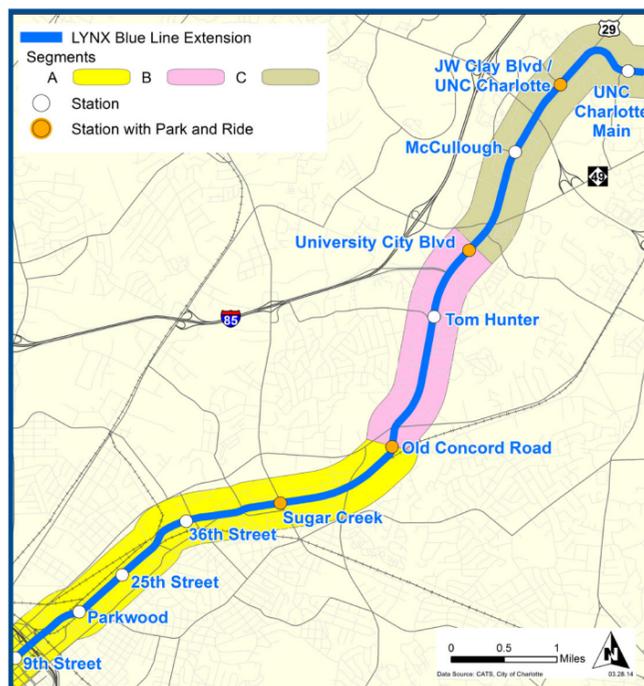
A number of the light rail bridges along the alignment require a different type of retaining wall called a mechanically stabilized earth or MSE wall. The MSE walls are structures that are connected at the beginning and end of the bridges, at the intersections where the light rail will cross over.

Crews are constructing MSE walls and driving piles for the support structures of the light rail bridges that will pass over the I-85 Connector and University City Boulevard intersections. These bridges will allow vehicular traffic to flow normally without a grade crossing.

Retaining walls are not the only thing going up along the alignment. Stations are already beginning to take shape. One of the 11 stations along the BLE, the Old Concord Station, already has a solid foundation constructed. Old Concord Station will have a surface lot with approximately 330 vehicle spaces, bicycle spaces, and a bus bay for hassle-free connections. Closer to Uptown, crews have begun the foundation of the Parkwood station. This station will be a walk-up station at the corner of Parkwood and Brevard.

Continue on next page...

BLE Alignment



Stay Connected

CATS has developed tools for you to stay informed about BLE construction updates. We want to hear from you! Your feedback is important to us. Let us know your questions or comments.

Here are some ways to make your voice be heard:

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

 www.facebook.com/CATSBlueLineExtensionUpdates

 @BLEupdates

Register to Receive Updates

 www.charlottefuture.com





Hauling in fill near UNC Charlotte station

Building the foundations of Charlotte's future

The BLE alignment is becoming more visible, significantly changing the appearance of the corridor. Crews have made significant progress on the northern end of the alignment along North Tryon Street and around the UNC Charlotte Station area. Work will soon become apparent on the bridges across the I-85 Connector and University City Boulevard intersections. Early in 2015, crews will begin removing sidewalks, and curbs, and altering driveways to prepare for matching the grade of the new roadway in multiple areas along North Tryon Street. When the BLE is complete, North Tryon Street from Old Concord

Road to the UNC Charlotte Station area will be better equipped to handle different types of traffic. Pedestrians will have sidewalks on both sides of the street. Bicyclists will have designated bike lanes on the roadway. Transit riders will be able to get from UNC Charlotte to Uptown in 22 minutes, making safe and easy bus connections at various light rail stations along the way.

As construction continues to improve transit in the Queen City, expect to see roadway work and adjustments to the traffic pattern, especially on North Tryon Street. Stay alert and follow directions from construction flaggers. Please stay out of work sites and be mindful when you are around construction areas. Let's keep working together, building our city's future and continuing to keep everyone safe.

Construction underway on two of the largest parking decks along the BLE



J.W. Clay parking garage rendering



University City parking garage rendering

Construction began in November on the J.W. Clay Boulevard and University City Boulevard parking garages.

"These parking decks will be easily accessed from both I-85 and I-485 and provide convenient access to the LYNX Blue Line Extension," said Project Manager, Kathleen Santimaw.

The J.W. Clay Boulevard parking garage will have five levels with 800 spaces for cars and 14 covered bicycle spaces. Construction will also include two bus bays along the private street adjacent to the parking garage, and a pedestrian bridge on the third level connecting the parking garage to the north end of the station platform.

The University City Boulevard parking garage will have six levels and approximately 1,500 spaces for cars and 24 covered bicycle spaces. Construction will include three bus bays along a private driveway and a pedestrian bridge on the fourth level to the University City Boulevard Station platform.

These parking decks are two of the largest park and ride facilities along the LYNX Blue Line Extension. They will be managed by the City's Engineering & Property Management Department, Special Projects Division. For more information or if you have questions or comments please contact the Project Manager, Kathleen Santimaw at 704-432-5214.

WINTER SAFETY AROUND CONSTRUCTION ZONES



**UNDER
CONSTRUCTION**

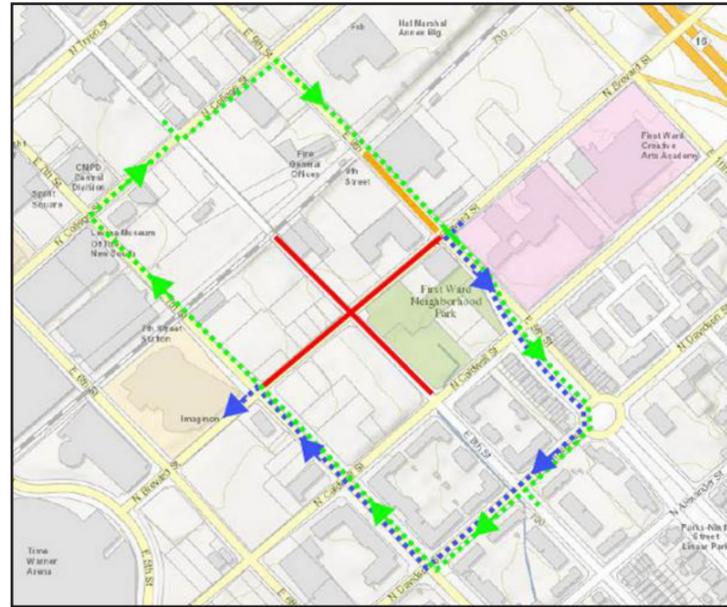
- **Slow down when driving in winter weather and increase your stopping distance**
- **Clean windows and mirrors**
- **BE CAREFUL** of ice on driveways and roadways in freezing temperatures. You can encounter ice when you least expect it, especially in the mornings and evenings as temperatures drop
- **STAY ALERT** for signage and follow directions from construction flaggers
- **Please stay out of work sites and be mindful when you are around construction areas**
- **Know your route – plan ahead and avoid potential congestion due to road and lane closures**
- **WATCH OUT** for and read message boards on roadways for important information or detour directions



ONGOING LONG TERM CLOSURES

E 8th Street is closed between College Street and Brevard Street for approximately 6 months.

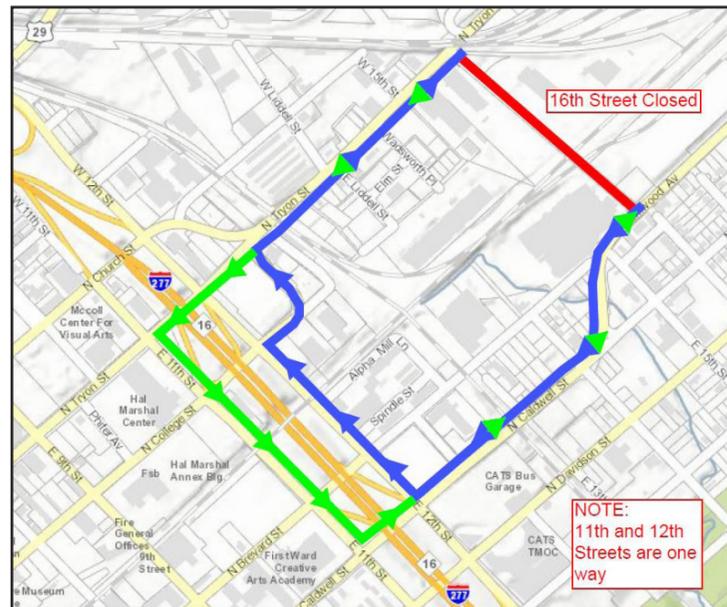
Access to all businesses and parking lots will be maintained.



East 16th Street between Parkwood and North Tryon is closed until February 2015.

Westbound detour via Parkwood Avenue, North Caldwell Street, 12th Street, North College Street and North Tryon Street. Eastbound detour is North Tryon Street, 11th Street, North Caldwell Street, and Parkwood Avenue.

NO pedestrian or vehicular traffic will be able to cross the railroad tracks or travel into this work zone.

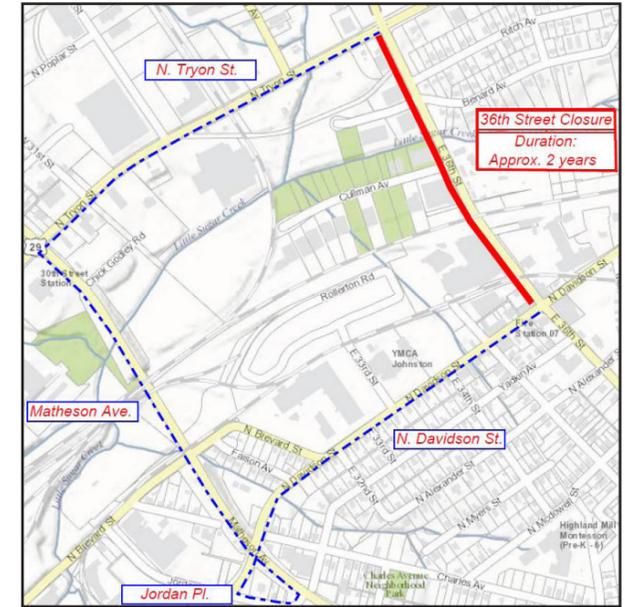


ONGOING LONG TERM CLOSURES

E 36th Street will remain closed at the Norfolk Southern railroad crossing just north of North Davidson Street for approximately 2 years.

Detour via North Davidson Street, Jordan Place, Matheson Avenue and North Tryon Street.

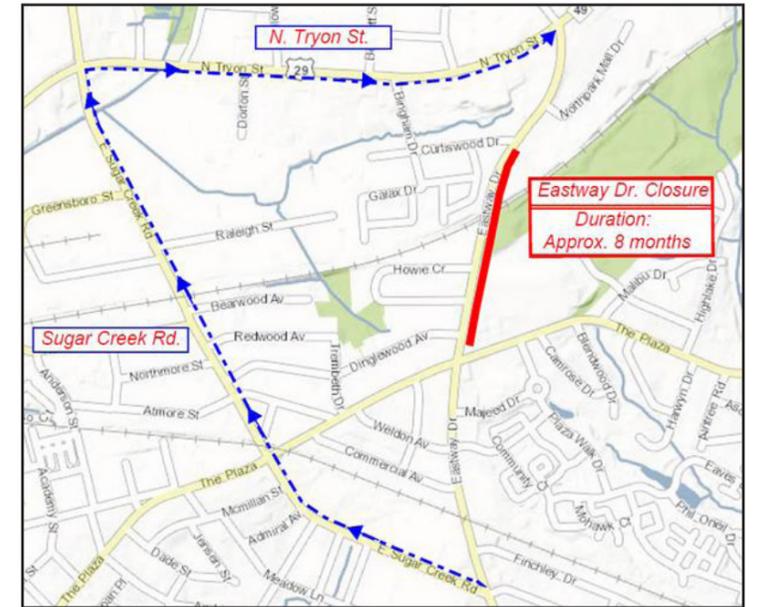
NO pedestrian or vehicular traffic will be able to cross the railroad tracks or travel into this work zone.



Eastway Drive is closed at the railroad bridge until late Spring 2015.

Detour via North Tryon Street and Sugar Creek Road.

NO pedestrian or vehicular traffic will be able to cross the bridge.



BE ALERT

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Increasing Visibility and Adapting to Market Demands



Business owners along the Blue Line Extension alignment

In our last quarterly newsletter you read visibility and access were two major focal points for business owners along the Blue Line Extension. These focal points still remain at the top of the list. Many of you find value in the “Notify Me”  email blast system, where you can sign up to receive road closure notices and construction updates. The closures of Eastway Drive, 16th Street, and 36th Street present a challenge for businesses who want to maintain customer traffic to their stores. The Blue Line Extension project team is working diligently to complete construction on time and understand the businesses’ concerns. We are currently working with businesses to keep them up to date on construction developments. At the same time, we understand businesses may need some ideas to help them communicate

with their customers during this transition period.

Online marketing is a great tool to use as a means of promoting your products or services. There are a number of online and social networking options (LinkedIn, Flickr, Foursquare, Facebook, Twitter, Vine and many more) a business can pursue to manage its brand and customer relations. Some businesses have used these media channels to promote contests, giveaways, and events which can attract new customers and further engage existing customers. We have also discussed the importance of creating a strong business community alliance to share ideas, best practices and develop a reciprocal referral system between businesses. Customer referral programs are a great way to use your greatest resource - loyal customers - to expand your reach to potential customers. Adding or promoting your business online presence may seem intimidating, but it is achievable.

If you are a business looking to increase your online visibility, we have an opportunity for you! Charlotte Business Resources, www.charlottebusinessresources.com, is looking for business owners that are interested in sharing their story of being a business owner. If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Christie Floyd at 704.336.6924 or cfloyd@charlottenc.gov. If you would like to receive Taking Care of Your Business or want to discuss your particular case, please contact Jennifer Duru at 704.336.5577 or jduru@charlottenc.gov.



We look forward to hearing from you!

The Northeast Corridor Infrastructure Program (NECI) Kicks Off

The Northeast Corridor Infrastructure (NECI) program kicked off in October with two public meetings. More than 75 citizens attended the first meeting on Tuesday, October 28, at Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church, and 50 citizens joined City staff on Wednesday, October 29, at the Hampton Park Community Center.

“I wanted to pass along my appreciation and gratitude for a fabulous and informative public meeting on Tuesday night,” said a resident of the North Tryon area. “I thought the presentation was clear and concise and I appreciated being able to have additional conversation with project experts.”

The NECI program will create street improvements in transit station areas along the LYNX Blue Line Extension currently under construction by the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS). The goal of the NECI program is to provide the community near the Blue Line Extension stations a safe and comfortable access to transit, whether they walk, bike or drive. The projects are also positioned to support economic development opportunities in accordance with the City’s growth strategy. The following are the projects included in the NECI program:



Citizens and City staff at the Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and BLE public meeting

- **Parkwood Avenue Streetscape**
- **25th Street Streetscape**
- **North Tryon and 36th Street Streetscape**
- **Philemon Street Extension**
- **Sugar Creek Streetscape**
- **Orr Road Extension**
- **Tom Hunter Road Streetscape**
- **Rocky River Road West Street Improvements**
- **McCullough Drive Streetscape/McCullough Drive Extension**
- **J.W. Clay Boulevard Streetscape**

Employees from the City’s Engineering & Property Management Department, CATS, Planning, Charlotte Department of Transportation, Corporate Communications and Marketing, and Neighborhood and Business Services attended the meetings to provide information and answer questions about projects.